

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration, reexamination, and allowance of the present patent application are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. The claim amendments are fully supported by the claims as they merely incorporate the subject matter of withdrawn or cancelled claims. Therefore, no new matter is added by this amendment, and entry is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 14 on page 2 of the Office Action, Claim 19 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. The foregoing amendments re-write Claim 19 so to be in independent form, and therefore allowance of Claim 19 and all claims dependent thereon is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

In the Office Action, beginning at page 3, Claims 24-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as reciting subject matters that allegedly are indefinite. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

First, Claim 24 does not refer back to any of Claims 1, 7, and/or 12, as alleged on page 3 of the Office Action. It is believed that this is a typographical error. Claims 25, 26, and 27 have been amended so that they do not depend on a withdrawn claim. Claims 25 and 27 are independent, while Claim 26 depends from Claim 25.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 24-27 fully comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the Office Action, beginning at page 3, Claims 18 and 20-22 were rejected

under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as reciting subject matters that allegedly are anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,329,548. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

Claim 18 has been cancelled, and claims 20-22 are now dependent on claim 19, which is independent and indicated as being allowable.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matters of Claims 18 and 20-22 are not anticipated by the '548 patent, are therefore not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102, and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office Action, beginning at page 4, Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as reciting subject matters that allegedly are obvious, and therefore allegedly unpatentable, over the disclosure of Yamada et al. in view of the disclosure of U.S. Patent No. 4,256,917. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

Claim 18 has been cancelled, therefore Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

In the Office Action, beginning at page 5, Claims 23-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as reciting subject matters that allegedly are obvious, and therefore allegedly unpatentable, over the disclosure of Hasegawa et al. in view of the disclosure of Yamada et al. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

Claims 23-24 are now dependent on independent Claim 19, which has been indicated as allowable.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the subject matters of Claims 23-24, each taken as a whole, would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention, are therefore not

unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).


Conclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present patent application is in condition for allowance. An early indication of the allowability of the present patent application is therefore respectfully solicited.

If Examiner Ewald believes that a telephone conference with the undersigned would expedite passage of the present patent application to issue, she is invited to call on the number below.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, if additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and the undersigned authorizes any necessary fees be charged to our deposit account 50-2821.

Respectfully submitted,

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